

## Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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O 030545Z APR 75 ZFF-4  
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH  
TO SECSTATE NIACT IMMEDIATE 138  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 5932

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AEMR, MOPS, CB, US

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

REF: CINCPAC 030150Z APR 75

1. IN LINE WITH YOUR INSTRUCTIONS WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF THINNING OUT OUR RANKS. OVER THE NEXT 48 HOURS WE EXPECT TO MOVE TO BANGKOK APPROXIMATELY 130 AMERICANS AND THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS FOR WHOM WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE EVACUATION PLAN. I HAVE INFORMED THE KHMER AUTHORITIES OF OUR INTENTION TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF OUR ESTABLISHMENT HERE TEMPORARILY AND HAVE STRESSED THAT THE BULK OF THE AMERICAN MISSION WOULD CONTINUE TO REMAIN HERE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

2. THIS MORNING I RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM ADMIRAL GAYLER IN HAWAII, CALLING TO MY ATTENTION THE INCREASED POTENTIAL THREAT TO PHNOM PENH RESULTING FROM THE CAPTURE BY THE KC OF SEVERAL 105 MM HOWITZERS AND LARGE STOCKS OF 105 MM AMMUNITION IN THE BANAM-NEAK LUONG AREA. HE BELIEVES THAT THIS INTRODUCES A NEW FACTOR INTO THE MILITARY SITUATION BECAUSE IT WILL SHORTLY INCREASE THE THREAT TO POCHENTONG AIRFIELD AND TO THE EMBASSY COMPOUND ITSELF. (CINCPAC 030150Z

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APR 75 REPEATED TO YOU BY THIS EMBASSY.) THERE ARE

ALSO CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT THE KC FORCES FREED BY THEIR VICTORY AT NEAK LUONG ARE BEING BROUGHT TO THE PHNOM PENH AREA, WHERE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO ATTACK THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER, WHICH AT THE PRESENT TIME IS ONLY VERY LIGHTLY DEFENDED BY FANK.

3. THE ASSESSMENT BY ADMIRAL GAYLER IS SHARED BY GENERAL PALMER, CHIEF OF MEDTC, THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND THE ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHES WHO ARE WORKING IN THE FIELD GATHERING INFORMATION FROM THE INDIVIDUAL FANK UNITS. WHILE THE TOP KHMER POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND SENIOR FANK OFFICERS ARE CONTINUING TO ACT IN A NORMAL FASHION, OUR ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHES WHO ARE VISITING THE UNITS IN THE FIELD HAVE DETECTED A DETERIORATION OF THEIR MORALE AND A MOOD OF RESIGNATION REGARDING THE INEVITABLE. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS IS THAT PHNOM PENH HAS ANYWHERE FROM 48 HOURS TO ONE WEEK BEFORE IT WILL SUCCUMB TO ENEMY PRESSURE. THE POPULATION IS STILL CALM AT THIS POINT, BUT THIS IS PRIMARILY DUE TO THEIR IGNORANCE OF THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS. WE HAVE HAD SOME UNFORTUNATE ACTS OF LOOTING AS, FOR EXAMPLE, FANK BREAKING INTO A WAREHOUSE TO REMOVE A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES WHICH WERE FLOWN IN BY AMERICAN PLANES OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS.

4. ADMIRAL GAYLER HAS RECOMMENDED TO THE ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF THAT WE EXECUTE THE FIRST PHASE OF EAGLE PULL "FIRST AVAILABLE DAYLIFT." HIS REASONING, AS I INTERPRET IT ON THE BASIS OF SKETCHY INFORMATION RECEIVED OVER SECURE PHONE, IS THAT WE NOW HAVE THE MEANS TO MOVE OUT A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY KHMERS, BECAUSE POCHENTONG REMAINS OPEN. THIS WOULD PERMIT US TO MOVE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF KHMERS BY FIXED WING AND ONCE THIS BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE, THE REST OF THE EVACUEES FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE WOULD BE TAKEN OUT BY HELICOPTER. IF I UNDERSTAND HIS REASONING, ADMIRAL GAYLER BELIEVES THAT UNLESS WE MOVE WHILE WE HAVE TIME AND THE CITY IS NOT UNDER INTENSIVE 105 SHELLING,

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THE MILITARY SITUATION WILL RAPIDLY DETERIORATE, THE PUBLIC WILL PANIC, FANK WILL COLLAPSE AND THE EXTRACTION WOULD THEN BE CARRIED OUT UNDER CONSIDERABLY MORE HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS. IN THE INTEREST OF SAVING LIVES AND MINIMIZING THE RISK TO THOSE FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE, ADMIRAL GAYLER IS RECOMMENDING THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS, THAT EAGLE PULL BE AUTHORIZED SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. I WOULD ONLY ADD TO THIS THAT ONCE

PHNOM PENH COMES UNDER INTENSIVE 105 HOWITZER SHELLING - ESPECIALLY THE CHANCERY AND THE LANDING ZONES FOR OUR HELICOPTERS - USAF WOULD HAVE TO EMPLOY SUUPRESSIVE FIRE AGAINST THESE ENEMY POSITIONS WHICH WOULD BE MESSY BUT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO ASSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE EVACUATION.

5. MY REPLY TO THE ADMIRAL OVER THE PHONE THIS MORNING WAS THAT I AM WORKING ON THE BASIS OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, WHICH HAVE AUTHORIZED ME TO REDUCE IN AN ORDERLY MANNER THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS AND THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE. THIS IS BEING DONE. IF THERE IS A CHANGE IN WASHINGTON'S THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT PLEASE LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY SO THAT WE CAN TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS HERE. I DO AGREE WITH ADMIRAL GAYLER IN ONE RESPECT: I THINK IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF DAYS UNTIL THE SITUATION WILL COLLAPSE MILITARILY IN PHNOM PENH. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IS 48 HOURS OR SEVERL DAYS.  
DEAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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